

Chapter 6

The Second Advent

Jesus clearly foretold of his return.¹ Yet he added that no one knew of the day and hour of his return, not the angels, not even himself.² Hence, it has been commonly thought unwise to speculate about the date, place and manner of the Second Advent.

Nevertheless, we can deduce from the words of Jesus, “But of that day and hour no one knows . . . but the Father only,”³ and the verse, “Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets,”⁴ that God, who knows the day and hour, will surely reveal all secrets about the Second Advent to His prophets before He carries out His work.

Although Jesus said that the Lord will come like a thief,⁵ it is also written that for those in the light, the Lord will not come covertly, like a thief.⁶ When we reflect upon the events at Jesus’ First Coming, we realize that he came like a thief to the priests and scribes who were in darkness, but to the family of John the Baptist, which was in the light, God plainly revealed Jesus’ birth beforehand. When Jesus was born, God divulged this secret to the three wise men, Simeon, Anna and the shepherds. Jesus said:

But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon

1. Matt. 16:27

2. Matt. 24:36

3. Ibid.

4. Amos 3:7

5. Rev. 3:3

you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man. —*Luke 21:34-36*

Thus, Jesus strongly suggested that the secret of the time, place and manner of his return will be revealed to the faithful people who are vigilant, that they may prepare for the day of the Second Advent.

In the providence of restoration, God always revealed to His prophets what He would do before He carried it out. The flood judgment in Noah's day, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the birth of Jesus are only a few examples. Accordingly, regarding the Second Advent of the Lord, God will certainly give prophecies to those faithful believers who are in the light and have ears to hear and eyes to see. As it is written:

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. —*Acts 2:17*

SECTION 1

WHEN WILL CHRIST RETURN?

We call the time of Christ's Second Advent the Last Days. As it was already explained, we are living in the Last Days today.⁷ We can thus understand that today is truly the time of Christ's return. From the standpoint of providential history, Jesus came at the conclusion of the two-thousand-year-long Old Testament Age, the Age of the Providence of Restoration. The Principle of Restoration through Indemnity leads us to infer that Christ is to return at the end of the two-thousand-year-long New Testament Age, the Age of the Prolongation of the Providence of Restoration, which has been restoring the previous age through substantial parallel conditions of indemnity.

As was discussed in detail with reference to the First World War, soon after the defeat of Germany and the Kaiser (the antitype of Adam on Satan's side), Stalin (the antitype of Christ at the Second Advent on Satan's side) rose to power and built up the communist world.⁸ This

6. I Thess. 5:4

7. cf. Eschatology 4

8. cf. Preparation 4.2.4

meant that the time was drawing nigh when Christ would return and restore through indemnity the ideal world characterized by interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values. We can thus conclude that the period of the Second Advent began soon after the end of the First World War.

SECTION 2

IN WHAT MANNER WILL CHRIST RETURN?

2.1 PERSPECTIVES ON THE BIBLE

God reveals well in advance all the essential matters of His Will in parables and symbols, in order that people living in any age can understand the demands of the providence for their time and for the future according to the level of their intellect and spirituality. The fact that God used parables and symbols in the Bible has inevitably resulted in many divergent interpretations. This is a major reason why the churches have become divided. In interpreting the Bible, therefore, the most important matter is to find the right perspective.

For example, consider John the Baptist. For two thousand years we read the Bible with the preconception that John completed his given mission; therefore, its passages appear to support this. But when we re-examined the Bible more closely from a different standpoint, we could clearly recognize that John the Baptist in fact did not complete his mission.⁹

Until today many of us have read the Bible with the preconceived notion that Jesus will come on the clouds with signs and wonders. This is based on such words of Jesus as:

They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds. —*Matt. 24:30-31*

If we adhere closely to a literal interpretation, the biblical evidence indeed seems to point in that direction. However, the idea that Christ will return on the clouds is totally unacceptable to the scientific mind of the modern age. We find it necessary to probe more deeply into the Bible from another standpoint to grasp the true meaning of such verses.

This new perspective is suggested by our earlier investigation of the biblical passages concerning John the Baptist. The prophet Malachi had

9. cf. Messiah 2.3

foretold that Elijah would return before the coming of the Messiah.¹⁰ As they eagerly awaited that day, many Jews believed that Elijah, who had ascended to heaven, would come down from heaven in the same way he had ascended. Contrary to their expectation, however, Jesus boldly claimed that John the Baptist, the son of Zechariah, was Elijah.¹¹ If we believe Jesus' testimony, the return of Elijah was never meant to take place in the miraculous manner many Jewish people expected. In fact, it occurred through the birth of a child. In like manner, many Christians to the present day believe that Jesus will return on the clouds. However, what we have learned about the actual return of Elijah suggests another possibility: that Christ's return may be fulfilled through the birth of a child, just as at the First Coming. From this new perspective, let us closely re-examine the biblical verses concerning the Second Coming.

At the First Coming of Jesus, many of the learned men of Israel thought that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem as a descendant of King David.¹² Yet there were undoubtedly many other Jews who expected the Messiah to come on the clouds. This belief was based on their reading of the prophecy of Daniel, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man,"¹³ and other prophecies of supernatural events in the Last Days.¹⁴ Therefore, the Pharisees and Sadducees questioned Jesus, demanding that he show them a sign from heaven as proof that he was the Messiah.¹⁵ Without any of the supernatural signs from heaven foretold in the Bible, they could not readily accept him as the long-awaited Messiah. The belief that the Messiah should come supernaturally persisted after the death of Jesus, even among some heterodox Christians who believed that he had not come in a body of flesh. The apostle John condemned those believers as antichrists:

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. —*II John 7*

Many Christians assert that the prophecy in Daniel concerns the Second Advent of Christ. However, in the Old Testament Age, God was working to fulfill the entire purpose of the providence of restoration with the coming of Jesus, as the Bible attests: "For all the prophets and

10. Mal. 4:5

11. Matt. 11:14

12. Matt. 2:5-6; Micah 5:2

13. Dan. 7:13

14. e.g., Joel 2:30-31

15. Matt. 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-12

the law prophesied until John,”¹⁶ and “For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified.”¹⁷ Thus, before Jesus himself began speaking about his return, no one ever even imagined a **Second Advent**. It is obvious that no Jew at the time thought this verse in Daniel referred to anything other than what they believed to be the first and only coming of the Messiah.

Contrary to the expectations of many faithful Jews who believed on biblical grounds that the Messiah would come on the clouds with signs and portents in the heavens, Jesus was born on the earth as a child in a lowly family. Hence, we should re-examine the Bible from the perspective that the Second Advent of Christ may not take place in a miraculous way. It may, in fact, take place in the same manner as the First Advent.

2.2 CHRIST WILL RETURN AS A CHILD ON THE EARTH

Jesus made a number of predictions foretelling what would happen to the Lord at his return:

But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.
—*Luke 17:25*

If Jesus were to return literally on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and with the trumpets of angels,¹⁸ would he not readily be accepted and honored, even by this sin-ridden world? Returning in such a manner, there is no way he would ever suffer persecution or rejection.

Why, then, did Jesus foretell that he would face such a miserable situation upon his return? The Jews of his day were eagerly looking forward to the day when Elijah would come down from heaven. He was supposed to come before the Messiah as his herald, as Malachi had prophesied.¹⁹ Instead, before the people had heard any news of Elijah’s return, Jesus, a man of lowly birth, came like a thief, claiming to be the Messiah. Therefore, they despised Jesus and persecuted him.²⁰ As Jesus reflected upon his situation, he foresaw that at the Second Advent, the Christians awaiting his return would once more fix their gaze upon the sky. Hence, they would be likely to persecute Christ at the Second Advent when he is born in the flesh and appears unexpectedly, like a thief. They would condemn him as a heretic, just as Jesus was condemned. That is why he

16. Matt. 11:13

17. Rom. 10:4

18. Matt. 24:30-31

19. Mal. 4:5

20. cf. Messiah 2.2

foretold that the Lord would suffer and be rejected by his generation. This prophecy can be fulfilled only if Christ returns in the flesh; it cannot possibly come true if he comes on the clouds.

Jesus said:

I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth? —*Luke 18:8*

As the world enters the Last Days, increasing numbers of Christians are striving to develop stronger faith. How can they all fall into faithlessness at the Second Advent of the Lord if he literally comes on the clouds of heaven amidst the sounds of angels' trumpets and the glory of God? This prophecy also cannot be fulfilled if Christ returns in a supernatural manner.

In Jesus' day, many Jews thought the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and emerge as their king,²¹ but only after Elijah had returned from heaven. Contrary to this expectation, before Elijah had appeared, a carpenter's son from Nazareth stepped forward and presented himself as the Messiah. It is thus understandable that Jesus could not find any believer among the Jews faithful and zealous enough to follow him even to the point of death. Jesus grieved over this situation and lamented that something similar might happen upon his return. He foresaw that at the Second Advent, the believers would be looking only toward heaven, thinking that Christ will return on the clouds in glory. Therefore, when Christ does in fact return to the earth as a man of humble origins, he may not find any faith, as was the case in Jesus' day. This prophecy in Luke can never be fulfilled unless the returning Christ is born on the earth.

Some scholars interpret this verse to mean that the tribulations in the Last Days will be so severe as to cause all believers to become faithless. Yet in the course of the providence, no tribulation, no matter how bitter, has effectively blocked the way of the faithful. How much less so in the Last Days, when faithful Christians are eager to pass through the last gate to Heaven! It is the universal nature of faith that the greater our trials and tribulations, the more zealously we seek God's salvation.

Jesus once said:

On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty

21. Matt. 2:6

works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers." —*Matt. 7:22-23*

If a Christian is so faithful as to perform miracles in the name of the Lord, then how much more ardently would he believe in and serve the Lord when he comes on the clouds in great glory? Wouldn't Jesus then receive him warmly? Why, then, did Jesus speak as if he would reject such faithful Christians upon his return? If the returning Christ rejects such devout believers, who in the Last Days can possibly be saved? This prophecy also cannot be fulfilled if Jesus comes on the clouds.

In Jesus' day, there must have been many Jews whose faith was so ardent that they could perform miracles in God's name. Yet, since they believed that Elijah himself would descend from heaven before the Messiah came, it was hard for them to accept that Elijah was present among them as John the Baptist—all the more so because of John's denial.²² Hence, they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah and ostracized him from the community. Consequently, Jesus had to abandon them in tears. In like manner, at the Second Advent of Christ, those Christians who expect his miraculous and glorious appearance will almost certainly reject him if he comes in the flesh of humble birth. No matter how faithful they may be, the Lord will be left with no choice but to abandon them because they will have transgressed against God.

The series of prophecies concerning the Last Days in Luke, Chapter 17, cannot possibly be fulfilled if Christ returns in a supernatural manner. These verses can be explained only on the premise that Christ will return by being born on the earth. Let us examine each of them closely.

The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed.
—*Luke 17:20*

If the Lord comes on the clouds or in some miraculous way, the Kingdom of God will arrive in a manner conspicuous to everyone. Even at the First Advent, the Kingdom of God had already arrived on the earth with the birth of Jesus. Yet the Jewish people could not see it, for since they were still waiting for the return of Elijah from heaven, they could not believe in Jesus. Likewise, at the Second Advent, although the Kingdom of God will dawn upon the earth with the birth of Christ, Christians who believe that he will come on the clouds accompanied by supernatural events will disbelieve in the Lord and thus not see the Kingdom of God.

22. John 1:21

Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. —*Luke 17:21*²³

In Jesus' day, those who believed in and followed him had already partaken of the Kingdom of Heaven in their hearts. Likewise, at Christ's Second Advent, because he will be born on the earth, the Kingdom of Heaven will be realized first in the hearts of those who believe in him and follow him. When these individuals increase in number to form societies and nations, the Kingdom of Heaven within will gradually be manifested in the world as an outward, visible reality. Accordingly, Jesus meant that the promised Kingdom of Heaven will not be realized in an instant, as it would if Christ were to return on the clouds.

You will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you will not see it. —*Luke 17:22*

If the Lord comes on the clouds with the sounds of angels' trumpets, everyone will be able to see him. Who, then, would desire to see the day of the Son of man and not see it? Yet Jesus foretold that the people will not see the day. At Jesus' First Advent, the day of the Son of man dawned upon the earth with his birth, yet the disbelieving Jews could not see the day. Likewise, at the Second Advent of Christ, the day of the Son of man will have dawned with his birth on earth. Yet many Christians will not be able to see the day because, convinced as they are that he will come in a miraculous way, they will not believe in him or follow him even after encountering him. Even though the day of the Son of man will have already come, they will not be able to see it.

And they will say to you, "Lo, there!" or "Lo, here!" Do not go, do not follow them. —*Luke 17:23*

As was discussed earlier,²⁴ in the Last Days Christians who have attained a certain spiritual level may receive the revelation that they are the Lord. Not understanding the basis in the Principle for such a revelation, they are likely to proclaim themselves to be the Messiah and thus become antichrists before the Lord to come. Therefore, Jesus spoke these words as a warning not to be misled or confused by such people.

As the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of man be in his day. —*Luke 17:24*

23. KJV

24. cf. Resurrection 2.2.6

When Jesus was born, the news of the birth of the King of the Jews reached King Herod and troubled all of Jerusalem.²⁵ At the Second Advent, advances in transportation and communication will allow the news of the Second Advent to travel to the far-flung corners of the globe, East and West, with lightning speed.

As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man.
—*Luke 17:26*²⁶

When Noah knew that the flood judgment was imminent, he called the people to enter his ark.²⁷ Yet they did not heed his words, and all were drowned. Similarly in the Last Days, Christ will return in the flesh and call to the people to enter the ark of truth. Yet Christians who stubbornly fix their gaze upon the sky, expecting to see miraculous signs of the Lord's appearance, will not heed the words of truth proclaimed from the earth. Instead, they will reject the Lord as a heretic. Heedless as the people of Noah's day, they will have failed to serve God's providential Will.

Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it. —*Luke 17:33*

Would anyone have to risk his life to follow the Lord if he comes on the clouds with the sounds of angels' trumpets? Because Jesus returns through a physical birth, he will appear to be a heretic to Christians who expect him to come in a miraculous way. Hence, those who follow him must be ready to face even death. The verse means that if the people believe in and follow him at the risk of their lives, they will live. If on the other hand, swayed by worldly circumstances, they turn against him and retreat from him to save their own skins, death will befall them.

Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.
—*Luke 17:37*

Thus Jesus answered a query about the place of the Second Advent. We recall that birds of prey descended upon the dove and pigeon which had not been properly divided on Abraham's altar.²⁸ This taught us that Satan is always looking for an opportunity to claim what is not sancti-

25. Matt. 2:2-3

26. Luke 17:25 was discussed previously.

27. II Pet. 2:5

28. Gen. 15:11

fied. We can thus understand the meaning of Jesus' enigmatic reply: just as vultures gather around a carcass to eat it, and devils gather around those who are spiritually dead to claim them, the Lord, who is the source of life, will come to a place of abundant spiritual life. Jesus meant by these words that the Lord will appear among the faithful believers. At Christ's Second Advent, people of ardent faith will gather together in one place with the assistance of many spirits.²⁹ This will be the place of life where the Lord will appear. Jesus was born among the chosen people, who worshipped God most faithfully. In particular, he revealed himself as the Messiah to those who had the faith to follow him and become his disciples.

Since Christ will be born on the earth at his Second Advent, it is written: "She brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne."³⁰ The rod of iron here signifies the Word of God, with which the Lord will judge the sinful world and restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It was earlier explained in detail³¹ that judgment by fire is judgment by the Word.³² Hence, the Word of Jesus, which will be our judge on the Last Day,³³ is the same Word by which heaven and earth will be cast into the fire of judgment,³⁴ and is the very breath of the Lord's mouth by which he will slay the lawless one.³⁵ The Word Jesus speaks is also called "the breath of his lips" and "the rod of his mouth."³⁶ It is symbolized by the rod of iron, as it is written, "He shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces."³⁷

The verse speaks of a male child, who is born of a woman and is caught up to God and to His throne. Who, then, is born of a woman as someone worthy to sit on God's throne and rule all the nations with the Word of God? He can be none other than Christ at the Second Advent, who will be born on the earth, rule as the King of Kings and build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.³⁸ At the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, there is a record of the four adulterous women in Jesus' lineage.³⁹ This shows that the Savior of humankind is to be born as a sinless man out of a sinful lineage to save all the descendants of sinful lineages. Many Christians have interpreted the woman in the above verse as the Church.⁴⁰ They drew this interpretation based on

29. cf. Resurrection 2.3.2.2; 3.1; 3.2

30. Rev. 12:5

31. cf. Eschatology 3.2.2

32. Jer. 23:29

33. John 12:48

34. II Pet. 3:7

35. II Thess. 2:8

36. Isa. 11:4

37. Rev. 2:27

38. Rev. 19:16

39. Matt. 1:3, 5, 6

40. "The rest of her offspring" (Rev. 12:17) should be taken to signify the adopted children of God. (Rom. 8:23)

the premise that Christ at the Second Advent would come on the clouds.

Some Christians believe that the Second Advent of Christ occurs whenever Jesus comes to dwell within the hearts of people⁴¹ through the descent of the Holy Spirit.⁴² Jesus has been dwelling within the hearts of faithful believers ever since his resurrection and the Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost.⁴³ If this were truly the Second Advent, then it already took place two thousand years ago.

Moreover, some denominations teach that Jesus will return as a spirit. However, immediately after his resurrection from the tomb on the third day, Jesus appeared before his disciples with the same appearance as he had during his earthly life. Ever since that time, he has freely visited and taught many Christians who have attained a high spiritual level. Thus, this sort of Second Coming also first took place two thousand years ago. If these were correct understandings, then we would have no reason to anticipate the historical Second Advent and look forward to it as the day which will fulfill our most cherished hopes.

Even though Jesus' disciples had frequent encounters with the resurrected Jesus who appeared to them in spirit, they still awaited his Second Advent. We can deduce that they were not anticipating the Second Advent to be Jesus' return as a spirit. For example, when Jesus appeared in a vision to the apostle John, he said to him, "Surely I am coming soon," to which John replied, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"⁴⁴ Here, Jesus and John both clearly distinguished Jesus' spiritual appearances from the Second Advent. This shows that Christ at his Second Advent will not come as a spirit. He will be born as a child on the earth, just as at the First Advent.

There are several reasons in the Principle why Christ must return as an earthly man. God created both the incorporeal world and the corporeal world. Then God created human beings with the aspects of both spirit and flesh, intending for them to rule over the two worlds in fulfillment of His blessings.⁴⁵ Due to Adam's Fall, human beings lost the qualification to be lords of the two worlds. Consequently, the creation was deprived of its true masters and has been lamenting and longing for the appearance of the children of God who can truly rule it.⁴⁶ Jesus, the perfected Adam, came as the perfect Lord of the two worlds.⁴⁷ By engrafting all believers with himself⁴⁸ and bringing them into oneness with him, he intended to make them qualified to be the lords of the universe.

41. John 14:20

42. Acts 8:15-17

43. Acts 2:4

44. Rev. 22:20

45. cf. Creation 6.3

46. Rom. 8:19-22

47. I Cor. 15:27

48. Rom. 11:17

Nevertheless, when the Jews turned against Jesus, God had to commit his body to the cross as a ransom for the redemption of humanity. Since Jesus' physical body was delivered into the hands of Satan, physical salvation was left unaccomplished. Jesus ascended from this earthly world with the promise that he would return and complete the salvation which he had realized only spiritually.⁴⁹ In the meantime, there has not been even one person on the earth who has attained perfection both spiritually and physically, ruled the spiritual and physical worlds, and brought them into harmony. This is the reason Christ cannot return only in a spiritual body. As at the First Advent, he must come as a human being and grow to perfection in both spirit and flesh. Then, by engrafting all humanity with himself both spiritually and physically, he is to guide them to perfection both in spirit and flesh and make them qualified to be the lords of both the spiritual and physical worlds.

Jesus was originally supposed to restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. He was to become the True Parent of restored humanity and the king of God's earthly kingdom.⁵⁰ However, due to the people's disbelief, he could not accomplish this original Will of God, but went to the cross promising to return at a later time and surely fulfill it. Accordingly, at the Second Advent, Christ is again responsible to build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and there become the True Parent and king of all humanity. This is another reason why, as at his First Coming, Christ at his Second Coming must be born on the earth.

The redemption of sins is possible only through an earthly life.⁵¹ To redeem our sins on the earth, Christ must come as a man on the earth. The salvation which Jesus provided through his crucifixion, however, is limited to the spiritual dimension. It does not resolve the original sin, which is transmitted through our physical bodies and remains active within us. Therefore, Christ must come again to provide complete salvation to humanity, including physical salvation. He certainly cannot achieve this if he comes only as a spirit. He must come in a physical body, as at his First Coming.

We have thus clarified that Christ's Second Advent will not be a spiritual coming, but a physical coming similar to the First Advent. Even supposing that Christ were to come back in spirit, it would be perplexing that the spirit, transcendent of time and space and perceptible only to the spiritual senses, would ride on clouds composed of matter. On the other hand, if the Second Advent were to occur through Christ's

49. cf. Messiah 1.4

50. Isa. 9:6; Luke 1:31-33

51. cf. Creation 6.3.2

sudden appearance in the flesh, riding on the clouds, how could he stay aloft? Where would he reside prior to his appearance? Some people may object to such questions, arguing that for the omnipotent God nothing is impossible. However, God cannot ignore His own laws and principles. God does not and need not work His providence in violation of His own Principle by having Christ, who should return in flesh no different from our own, reside in outer space and then return borne on clouds. In conclusion, we have demonstrated beyond any doubt that the Second Advent of Christ will take place through his physical birth on the earth.

2.3 WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE VERSE THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN ON THE CLOUDS?

Since Christ's return will take place through his birth on earth, what can be the meaning of the biblical prophecies that he will come on the clouds? To probe into this matter, we must first investigate what the clouds represent. The following passage is typical:

Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. —*Rev. 1:7*

According to this verse, everyone should be able to see Christ when he returns. When St. Stephen was martyred, only he and those faithful Christians whose spiritual senses were open were able to see Jesus sitting at the right hand of God.⁵² Likewise, if Jesus is to descend from the spirit world as a spirit, then only those believers whose spiritual senses are open will be able to see him; thus not every eye would see Christ when he comes again. The biblical prophecy that everyone will see the Lord can be fulfilled only if he returns in the flesh. Since a body of flesh cannot ride on the clouds, the clouds in the verse must symbolize something else.

In the same passage, it is also written that even those who pierced Jesus will see his return. Those who pierced Jesus were Roman soldiers. However, those Roman soldiers will not be able to see the Lord at his return. To behold the returning Lord, those soldiers must be resurrected; but according to the Bible, those who will be resurrected at Christ's return are only those faithful Christians who participate in the first resurrection. The rest of the spirits will be resurrected only after the passage of "a thousand years" in the Kingdom.⁵³ Therefore, "every one who

52. Acts 7:55

53. Rev. 20:4-5

pierced him” must be a metaphor describing some other group of people, not the Roman soldiers. In fact, it refers to those Christians alive at the time of the Second Advent who hold fast to the belief that Jesus will return on the clouds. When Christ returns to the earth through a humble birth contrary to their expectation, they will not recognize him but will persecute him. If “every one who pierced him” is a metaphor, then the clouds in the same verse should also be metaphorical.

What do the clouds actually symbolize? Clouds are formed by the evaporation of impure water from the earth. In the Bible, water often symbolizes fallen people.⁵⁴ We may deduce that clouds symbolize devout Christians whose hearts dwell in heaven and not on the earth because they have been reborn and raised from their fallen state. The Bible and other sacred scriptures also use the symbolism of clouds to indicate the multitudes.⁵⁵ We sometimes find this figure of speech used in casual conversation. In Moses’ course, the pillar of cloud which guided the Israelites by day represented Jesus, who was to come as the leader of Israel; the pillar of fire by night represented the Holy Spirit who, as Jesus’ counterpart, would guide Israel by the fire of inspiration. We can conclude that Jesus’ coming on the clouds signifies that he will emerge from among a group of reborn believers to become the leader of Christians, the Second Israel. Recall that when Jesus was asked about the place of his return, he replied, “Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”⁵⁶ Jesus meant by this that he will return to the place where faithful believers have gathered, which basically signifies the same thing as the biblical prophecy that Christ will return on the clouds.

When we interpret the clouds metaphorically in this way, it is evident that at his First Coming Jesus himself symbolically came down from Heaven on the clouds. It is written, “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven,”⁵⁷ and “No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.”⁵⁸ Even though Jesus was born on the earth, from the standpoint of the providence and with regard to his true value, he indeed came from Heaven. This is also the true meaning of the prophecy in Daniel⁵⁹ which foretold that Jesus would come on the clouds.

54. Rev. 17:15; Ps. 144:7

55. Heb. 12:1; cf. Ezek. 38:9

56. Luke 17:37

57. I Cor. 15:47

58. John 3:13

59. Dan. 7:13

2.4 WHY DID JESUS SAY THAT THE LORD WILL COME ON THE CLOUDS?

There are two reasons why Jesus prophesied that the Lord will return on the clouds. First, it was to prevent the delusions of antichrists from creating confusion among believers. If Jesus revealed plainly that he would return through a physical birth, then it would have been impossible to prevent false messiahs from causing great confusion. Since Jesus emerged as the Messiah from a humble background, anyone from any social stratum with a certain level of spirituality could claim to be his Second Advent and dazzle the world with a great delusion. Fortunately, since most Christians have expected Christ to return on the clouds and have fixed their gaze upon the sky, this turmoil has been largely avoided. Now, however, since the time is full, the truth that Christ will return through a physical birth must be revealed.

Second, it was to encourage Christians who were walking a difficult path of faith. There are other occasions when Jesus gave paradoxical words to encourage his followers to accomplish God's Will as rapidly as possible. For example, he said, "Truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes."⁶⁰ This led his disciples to believe that the Second Advent would take place in the near future. When Jesus told Peter of his approaching martyrdom, Peter asked him what would become of the disciple John. Jesus replied, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"⁶¹ Jesus also said, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."⁶² These sayings led the disciples to think they would meet the returning Jesus in their lifetime.

The hope of Jesus' imminent return inflamed the zeal of his disciples and gave them the strength to overcome persecution by Judaism and the Roman Empire. Encouraged by the ardent hope of the Second Advent, they were filled with the Holy Spirit⁶³ and established the early Christian Church, even amidst great adversity. Jesus wanted to inspire and encourage his disciples, who would be carrying a heavy cross. For this reason, he prophesied that he would come on the clouds in the power and glory of God and accomplish everything at lightning speed.

60. Matt. 10:23

61. John 21:22

62. Matt. 16:28

63. Acts 2:1-4

SECTION 3

WHERE WILL CHRIST RETURN?

If Christ comes again as a man born on the earth, he will certainly be born among a people who are chosen by God in accordance with His predestination. Where is the place God has chosen for Christ's return? Who are the people chosen to receive him?

3.1 WILL CHRIST RETURN AMONG THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

Some Christians expect that Christ will come again among the Jewish people, based on several passages from the Bible: "And I heard the number of the sealed, a 144,000 sealed, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel,"⁶⁴ and "Truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes."⁶⁵ However, to interpret these verses in this way is to misunderstand God's providence.

On this matter, Jesus uttered the parable of the vineyard:

"Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them . . . "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it." —*Matt. 21:33-43*

In this parable, the householder represents God, the vineyard represents God's work, the tenants entrusted with the work represent the Jewish people, the servants represent the prophets, the son of the householder represents Jesus, and the other tenants who harvest the fruits represent some other nation which can receive Christ at the Second Advent and realize God's Will. By this parable, Jesus conveyed that he will not

64. Rev. 7:4

65. Matt. 10:23; cf. Matt. 16:28

come again to the people who persecuted him. God will take away the mission previously entrusted to them and give it to another people who can produce its fruits upon Christ's return.

Why, then, does the Bible seem to portray Christ as returning to Israel? To answer this question, we must first inquire as to the meaning of Israel. "Israel" means the one who has prevailed. Jacob received this name upon defeating the angel who wrestled with him at the ford of Jabbok.⁶⁶ Jacob wrestled with the angel to secure the position of Abel for the foundation of substance. By successfully securing the position of Abel and making the substantial offering, Jacob established the family foundation for the Messiah. His descendants, who inherited the responsibility for God's providence upon this foundation, are called Israel or the chosen people. The term "Israel" thus signifies the people of God who have triumphed through their faith and does not necessarily apply to everyone who comes out of Jacob's lineage. Thus, John the Baptist said to the Jews, "Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham."⁶⁷ Moreover, St. Paul said, "For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal,"⁶⁸ and "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel."⁶⁹ They reproached those Jews who boasted that they were the chosen people based only on their lineal connection to Abraham, even though they were not in fact living according to the Will of God.

It can be said that the descendants of Jacob were Israel at the time of their departure from Egypt under Moses' leadership, but they no longer were when they turned against God in the wilderness. Therefore, God swept them away in the wilderness and led only the younger generation into Canaan; these God regarded as the true Israel. Of the descendants of Abraham who entered the land of Canaan, the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel, who transgressed against God, perished because they lost their qualification as God's chosen people. Only the two tribes of the southern kingdom of Judah, who continued to uphold the Will of God, remained the chosen people who could eventually receive Jesus. Nevertheless, when they led Jesus to the cross, they also lost their qualification to be the people centrally responsible for God's providence.

66. Gen. 32:28

67. Matt. 3:9

68. Rom. 2:28-29

69. Rom. 9:6

Who became the chosen people after Jesus' crucifixion? They were none other than the Christians who inherited the faith of Abraham and took on the mission which Abraham's descendants did not complete. St. Paul wrote, "Through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous,"⁷⁰ testifying that the center of God's providence of restoration had shifted from the Jews to the Gentiles.⁷¹ Therefore, the chosen people who should lay the foundation for Christ at the Second Advent are not the descendants of Abraham, but rather the Christians who have inherited the faith of Abraham.

3.2 CHRIST WILL RETURN TO A NATION IN THE EAST

As Jesus explained through the parable of the vineyard,⁷² when the Jewish people, like the tenants in the parable who killed the son of their master, led Jesus to the cross, they lost their providential mission. Which nation, then, will inherit the work of God and bear its fruits? The Bible suggests that this nation is in the East.

The Book of Revelation describes the opening of a scroll sealed with seven seals:

And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, "Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." —*Rev. 5:1-5*

The Lion of the tribe of Judah signifies Christ; it is he who will open the seven seals in the Last Days. After six of the seals are opened:

Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice . . . saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads." And I heard the number of the sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand. —*Rev. 7:2-4*

70. Rom. 11:11

71. Acts 13:46

72. Matt. 21:33-43

This indicates that the seal of the living God will be placed on the foreheads of the 144,000 in the East, where the sun rises. These chosen ones will accompany the Lamb at his return.⁷³ We can thus infer that the nation which will inherit the work of God and bear its fruit for the sake of the Second Advent is in the East. There Christ will be born and received by the 144,000 elect of God. Which among the nations of the East is chosen to receive the Lord?

3.3 THE NATION IN THE EAST IS KOREA

Since ancient times, the nations in the East have traditionally been considered to be the three nations of Korea, Japan and China. Among them, Japan throughout its history has worshipped the sun goddess, Amaterasu-omi-kami. Japan entered the period of the Second Advent as a fascist nation and severely persecuted Korean Christianity.⁷⁴ China at the time of the Second Advent was a hotbed of communism and would become a communist nation. Thus, both nations belonged to Satan's side. Korea, then, is the nation in the East where Christ will return. Let us examine from the viewpoint of the Principle the various ways in which Korea has become qualified to receive Christ at the Second Advent. As the nation to which the Messiah returns, Korea had to meet the following qualifications.

3.3.1 A NATIONAL CONDITION OF INDEMNITY

For Korea to become a nation fit to receive the Messiah, it had to fulfill a national dispensation of forty for the separation of Satan for the cosmic-level restoration of Canaan. Why was Korea given this condition of indemnity? If Christ returns to Korea, the Korean people are destined to become the Third Israel. In the Old Testament Age, the descendants of Abraham who upheld God's Will and endured persecution in Egypt were the First Israel. The Christians, who were persecuted as heretics by the Jews as they honored the resurrected Jesus and carried on the providence of restoration, became the Second Israel. Christ at his return is likely to be similarly condemned as a heretic by the Christians of his time, in accordance with the prophecy that he will suffer and be rejected by his generation,⁷⁵ as was Noah in his days. If so, God will have to abandon the Christians who are persecuting Christ, just as He abandoned the Jews who rejected Jesus.⁷⁶ Then the Korean people, who will

73. Rev. 14:1

74. cf. Preparation 4.3.3

75. Luke 17:25

76. Matt. 7:23

attend the returning Christ and support him to complete the third chapter of God's providence, will become the Third Israel.

The First Israel suffered four hundred years in Egypt. This was to fulfill a dispensation of forty for the separation of Satan as required to set out on the national course to restore Canaan. The Second Israel had to prevail over the four hundred years of persecution in the Roman Empire to fulfill a dispensation of forty for the separation of Satan, as required to commence the worldwide course for the restoration of Canaan. As the Third Israel, the Korean people had also to suffer under a nation on Satan's side for a period which fulfills the number forty. Thereby, they could fulfill a dispensation of forty for the separation of Satan as required to commence the cosmic-level course to restore Canaan. This was the forty-year period during which Korea suffered untold hardships as a colony of Japan.

Korea was an early objective of Japan's imperialist policy. The Ŭlsa Treaty of Protection, concluded in 1905 by Hirohumi Ito of Japan and Wan-yong Lee of Korea,⁷⁷ imposed on Korea the status of a Japanese protectorate. All of Korea's diplomatic rights were given over to the care of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Japan. Japan stationed a governor-general and appointed military officials in every district to control all of Korea's domestic affairs. In a short time, Japan had forced its will upon the Korean people, dictating their politics, diplomacy and economic affairs.

Japan forcibly annexed Korea in 1910. The Japanese committed atrocities against the Korean people, imprisoning and executing many patriots and depriving the people of their freedom. When a movement for independence broke out on March 1, 1919, the Japanese killed thousands of civilians in every part of the peninsula. At the time of the great Kanto earthquake in 1923, the Japanese made scapegoats of innocent Koreans living in Tokyo and massacred many of them. Meanwhile, many Koreans who could no longer endure Japanese oppression gave up their homes and fled to the wilderness of Manchuria in pursuit of freedom. There they endured untold hardships and gave their hearts and souls for the independence of their homeland. The Japanese military searched from village to village for these loyal Koreans. In some villages, they herded young and old alike into a building and set it on fire, burning them alive. Japan continued such tyranny right up to the day of its fall.

The Koreans who were killed in the March 1 independence movement and in the wilderness of Manchuria were predominantly Christians. Toward the end of its colonial rule, Japan embarked on a notorious policy to stamp out independent Christianity in Korea.

77. A pro-Japanese Minister of Education

Christians were forced to worship at Shinto shrines; those who did not comply were imprisoned or executed. When Emperor Hirohito of Japan surrendered at the end of World War II, the Korean people were finally liberated from their bondage.

The Korean people suffered for forty years, from the Ŭlsa Treaty of Protection of 1905 to their liberation in 1945. Their suffering paralleled the hardships of the First Israel in Egypt and the Second Israel in the Roman Empire. Korea's independence movement was led mainly by Christians, both at home and abroad; it was the Christians who suffered the most under Japan's tyranny.

3.3.2 GOD'S FRONT LINE AND SATAN'S FRONT LINE

In the Last Days, the world is divided into the democratic world and the communist world. Because he had given Adam the blessing of dominion, God had to give Satan a free rein to create through Adam's descendants an unprincipled world. God has had to follow in pursuit, working to restore the unprincipled world to His side. When Christ returns to restore this fallen world to its original state as created by God, he will surely work to save the communist world. No doubt the nation to which he returns will play the central role in this dispensation. Korea, the nation where Christ will return, is the place most dear to God and most abhorred by Satan. It is the front line for both God and Satan, a place where the forces of democracy and the forces of communism collide. This line of confrontation is Korea's thirty-eighth parallel, which was drawn to fulfill the providence of God.

At the point of confrontation between God and Satan, a sacrifice must be offered as the condition to determine the outcome of their struggle. The Korean people were this sacrifice, placed on this front line of battle to be offered for the sake of the restoration of the universe. Therefore, God divided the Korean nation, just as Abraham's sacrifices were supposed to be divided. This is the reason behind the division of Korea by the thirty-eighth parallel, which split it into two nations: one Cain-type and the other Abel-type.

The thirty-eighth parallel is the front line of battle between democracy and communism. At the same time, it is the front line of battle between God and Satan. The Korean War, which raged across the thirty-eighth parallel, was not merely a civil war; it was a conflict between the democratic world and the communist world. Moreover, it was a conflict between God and Satan. Because this war had worldwide significance for the accomplishment of the providence of restoration, the armed forces

of the member states of the United Nations were mobilized for the first time. Even though the participating nations may not have understood this providential significance, they were acting in line with God's Will for the liberation of the spiritual fatherland.

At the fall of the first human ancestors, God's side and Satan's side parted ways from a single point. Life and death, good and evil, love and hate, happiness and sorrow, fortune and misfortune, all have divided from a single point and come into continual conflict with each other in human history. These divided realities consolidated separately into the Cain-type and Abel-type worlds, which eventually matured to form the democratic world and the communist world. When these two worlds came into global conflict, it was centered on the Korean peninsula. Religions, ideologies, political forces and economic systems all came into conflict and caused great confusion in Korean society, which then had worldwide impact. This is because phenomena which took place in the spirit world unfolded as physical reality in Korea, the central providential nation, and were magnified worldwide. This outbreak of social and ideological chaos was a clear sign that a new world order was fast approaching. As Jesus once said, "As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near."⁷⁸

When the disciples asked Jesus of the place of his return, he said, "Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered."⁷⁹ Eternal life and eternal death collide in Korea, the front line of the battle between God and Satan. Devils, symbolized by the eagles, gather in this land in search of the spiritually dead, while the returning Lord comes to this land in search of the people of abundant life.

3.3.3 THE OBJECT PARTNER OF GOD'S HEART

To become the object partners of God's Heart, we must first walk a path of blood, sweat and tears. Ever since human beings fell under the dominion of Satan and came to oppose God, God has been grieving with the heart of a parent who lost his children. God has labored continually in the sinful world to save immoral and wretched human beings who are nonetheless His children. Moreover, in His efforts to recover His rebellious children, time and time again God had to let the most righteous and beloved ones be sacrificed to the satanic world, even delivering Jesus, His only begotten Son, to the cross. God has been

78. Matt. 24:32

79. Luke 17:37

grieving in this way every day since the human Fall.⁸⁰ Accordingly, an individual, family or nation who is fighting the satanic world for the sake of God's Will cannot avoid the path of blood, sweat and tears. How can we, as loyal and faithful children, be comfortable and complacent and still expect to remain the object partners of our Heavenly Father, who is suffering in deep agony?

The nation which can receive the Messiah should become the object partner of God's Heart by demonstrating filial piety. That is why it must walk a path of blood, sweat and tears. Both the First Israel and the Second Israel walked a path of suffering. The Korean people, the Third Israel, have done likewise. Their miserable history was the path required of the chosen people of God. One can never be certain what great blessings such a path of affliction may eventually bring.

The nation qualified to stand as the object partner of God's Heart must be a people of goodness. The Korean people, a homogeneous race with a four-thousand-year history, rarely invaded other nations. Even during the Kokuryo and Silla periods, when they boasted impressive military might, they used their forces only to thwart invaders. Considering that a fundamental nature of Satan is to aggressively encroach upon others, it is clear that the Korean people are qualified to stand on God's side. God's strategy is to claim victory after His side has been attacked first. Although countless prophets and saints have been sacrificed in the course of history, and even Jesus died on the cross, time and again God claimed victory in the end. Although Satan's side was the aggressor in the First and Second World Wars, in the end victory was won by the nations on God's side. Similarly, the Korean people have been invaded numerous times by foreign powers. God's true intention in having them endure these tribulations was to have them stand on His side and secure the final victory.

The Korean people are by nature endowed with a religious character. Their religious inclination has led them to strive always for that which transcends physical reality and is of more profound value. From ancient times, when their culture was still primitive, the Korean people have evinced a strong desire to worship God. They did not have a high regard for religions which superstitiously deified nature or strove for happiness in temporal life. They have always revered the virtues of loyalty, filial piety and chastity. Their fondness for folk tales which express these virtues, such as "The Tale of Shim-ch'ōng" and "The Tale of Ch'unhyang," stems from this powerful underpinning of their culture.

80. Gen. 6:6

3.3.4 MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

The Korean people have long cherished a messianic hope, nurtured by the clear testimonies of their prophets. The First Israel believed in the testimonies of its prophets⁸¹ that the Messiah would come as their king, establish the Kingdom and bring them salvation. The Second Israel was able to endure an arduous path of faith due in part to their hope in the return of Christ. Similarly, the Korean people, the Third Israel, have believed in the prophecy that the Righteous King will appear and found a glorious and everlasting kingdom in their land. Clinging to this hope, they found the strength to endure their afflictions. This messianic idea among the Korean people was revealed through the *Chōnggamnok*, a book of prophecy written in the fourteenth century at the beginning of the Yi dynasty.

Because this prophecy foretold that a new king would emerge, the ruling class tried to suppress it. The Japanese colonial regime tried to stamp out this notion by burning the book and oppressing its believers. After Christianity became widely accepted, the idea was ridiculed as superstition. Nevertheless, this messianic hope still lives on, deeply ingrained in the soul of the Korean people. The hoped-for Righteous King foretold in the *Chōnggamnok* has the appellation Chōngdoryōng (the one who comes with the true Word of God). In fact, this is a Korean prophecy of the Christ who is to return to Korea. Even before the introduction of Christianity to Korea, God had revealed through the *Chōnggamnok* that the Messiah would come to that land. Today, scholars affirm that many passages of this book of prophecy coincide with the prophecies in the Bible.

Furthermore, among the faithful of every religion in Korea are those who have received revelations that the founders of their religions will return to Korea. We learned through our study of the progress of cultural spheres⁸² that all religions are converging toward one religion. God's desire is for Christianity of the Last Days to become this final religion which can assume the responsibility of completing the goals of the many religions in history. The returning Christ, who comes as the center of Christianity, will attain the purposes which the founders of religions strove to accomplish. Therefore, with respect to his mission, Christ at his return may be regarded as the second coming of the founder of every religion.⁸³ When the second comings of the founders of the vari-

81. Mal. 4:2-5; Isa. 60:1-22

82. cf. Eschatology 4.2

83. cf. Resurrection 2.4

ous religions appear in Korea in fulfillment of the diverse revelations, they will not come as different individuals. One person, Christ at the Second Advent, will come as the fulfillment of all these revelations. The Lord whose coming has been revealed to believers in various religions, including the Maitreya Buddha in Buddhism, the True Man in Confucianism, the returning Ch'oe Su-un who founded the religion of Ch'öndogyo, and the coming of Chöngdoryöng in the *Chönggammok*, will be none other than Christ at the Second Advent.

Finally, we witness revelations and signs being given to spiritually attuned Christians testifying to the Second Coming of Christ in Korea; they are sprouting in profusion like mushrooms after a rain. God's promise that He will pour out His spirit upon all flesh⁸⁴ is being fulfilled among the Korean people. As devout Christians make contact with spirits from various levels of the spirit world, from the lower realms to Paradise, many are receiving clear revelations that the Lord will come to Korea. However, the current leadership of the Korean Christian churches is fast asleep. Spiritually ignorant, they go about their ministries oblivious to these signs of the times. This is similar to what happened in Jesus' time. The priests, rabbis and scribes, who should have been the first to recognize the birth of the Messiah, remained entirely ignorant of it because they were spiritually blind. The astrologers and shepherds who received revelations were the ones who knew of Jesus' birth.

Jesus said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to babes."⁸⁵ He was lamenting over the spiritual ignorance of the Jewish leadership of his time, while on the other hand, he was grateful that God bestowed grace upon pure and uneducated believers by revealing His providence to them. In today's Korean Christianity, at a time parallel to Jesus' day, similar phenomena are taking place, albeit in more complex ways. Through pure and innocent lay believers, God has been revealing many heavenly secrets concerning the Last Days. However, because they would be chastised as heretics if they were to proclaim them in public, they are keeping these truths to themselves. Meanwhile, like the priests, rabbis and scribes of Jesus' time, many Christian clergy take pride in their knowledge of the Bible and their ability to interpret it. They take pleasure in the reverence they receive from their followers; they are content to carry on the imposing duties of their offices; yet, to God's grief, they are entirely ignorant of God's providence in the Last Days.

84. Acts 2:17

85. Matt. 11:25

3.3.5 THE CULMINATION OF ALL CIVILIZATIONS

Spiritual and material civilization, built upon religion and science—the quests to overcome the two aspects of human ignorance—must be brought into harmony. Only then can we resolve the fundamental problems of human life and realize the world of God’s ideal.⁸⁶ In the world Christ comes to realize, science will be highly developed. It will be a society with the highest level of civilization, one in which all civilizations which have developed through the vertical course of providential history will be restored horizontally under the leadership of the Lord. Therefore, the spiritual and material aspects of civilization developing from religion and science, which have flourished all over the world, will be embraced and harmonized in Korea as guided by the new truth. Then they will bear fruit in the ideal world of God’s deepest desire.

First, the essences of all civilizations which developed on the land should bear fruit in Korea. The ancient continental civilizations which arose in Egypt and Mesopotamia bequeathed their fruits to the peninsular civilizations of Greece, Rome and Iberia, and thence to the island civilization of Great Britain. This island civilization passed on its culture to the United States, a continental civilization. Then the direction was reversed, with the United States passing on its culture to the island civilization of Japan. Now these fruits are to be harvested in the peninsular civilization of Korea, where Christ is to be born.

Next, the essences of civilizations born on the shores of rivers and seas should bear fruit in the Pacific civilization to which Korea belongs. The river civilizations which arose on the shores of the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates Rivers passed on their cultures to the civilizations in the vicinity of the Mediterranean Sea: Greece, Rome, Spain and Portugal. These bequeathed their fruits to the civilizations on the Atlantic Ocean: notably, Great Britain and the United States. All these fruits will be harvested in the civilization of the Pacific Ocean, which links together the United States, Japan and Korea.

Last, civilizations born out of different climate zones should bear fruit in Korea. In the round of the seasons, living things begin their life and multiplication in spring, flourish in summer, bear fruit in autumn, and store their reserves in winter. The cycle of spring, summer, autumn and winter is repeated not only year by year, but also day by day: morning corresponds to spring, afternoon to summer, evening to autumn, and night to winter. The four phases of human life—childhood, youth, middle age, and old age—also fit this pattern. Human history, too, unfolds

86. cf. Eschatology 5.1

according to the seasons, because an aspect of God's Principle underlying His creation is the harmonious, seasonal circle of life.

God created Adam and Eve in the springtime of human history. Accordingly, history was supposed to begin from the temperate-zone civilization of Eden. Then, in its summer season, it should have moved to a tropical civilization; in autumn, to a cool-zone civilization; and it should have reached its culmination in a frigid-zone civilization analogous to the winter season. However, due to the Fall, human beings were degraded to the level of savages. Instead of building a temperate-zone civilization, they prematurely came to live in the tropical zones as primitive men. On the continent of Africa, they built the tropic-zone civilization of Egypt. This continental civilization passed on its culture to the peninsulas and islands where cool-zone civilizations developed. They bequeathed their fruits to the frigid-zone civilization of the Soviet Union. Now this current is to culminate in the formation of the temperate-zone civilization of the new Eden. This should certainly take place in Korea, where all civilizations are to bear fruit.

SECTION 4

PARALLELS BETWEEN JESUS' DAY AND TODAY

The period of the Second Advent is parallel to the time of Jesus. The situations unfolding in Christianity today are similar to those which took place in Judaism at Jesus' time. Let us examine some of these parallels.

Today's Christianity, like the Judaism of Jesus' day, adheres too rigidly to institutional authority and ceremonies, while internally it is corrupt. At the time of Jesus, many priests and scribes had become enslaved to ritualism and legalism, and their spiritual life was corrupt. Therefore, Jews with sincere faith flocked to Jesus, that accused heretic, to slake their spiritual thirst. Similarly, in today's Christianity, many leading clergymen and priests are captive to their authorities and enamored of their rituals while their spirits grow dimmer each day. Hence, devout Christians are wandering about the mountains and plains in search of the true path. They are seeking new leaders who can guide them out of this spiritual wilderness and show them the way to the inner light.

Christian leaders today, like the Jewish leaders of Jesus day, will probably be the first to persecute Christ at the Second Advent. Jesus came to found a new era which would fulfill the words of the Old Testament proclaimed by the prophets. He did not limit himself to repeat-

ing the words of the Old Testament, but gave new words of truth fit for the new era. The Jewish priests and scribes criticized Jesus' words and deeds based on their narrow understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures. Their mistaken judgment led them to deliver Jesus to the cross.

Similarly, the purpose of Christ at the Second Advent is to build a new heaven and a new earth⁸⁷ upon the foundation of the spiritual salvation which had been laid by Christianity in the New Testament Age. When he returns, he will not merely repeat the words of the New Testament given two thousand years ago, but will surely add new words of truth necessary for the founding of a new heaven and a new earth. However, those Christians of today whose minds are narrowly attached to the letter of the New Testament will criticize the words and deeds of Christ at his return based on their narrow understanding of the Scriptures. Therefore, it can be expected that they will brand the Lord a heretic and persecute him. This is why Jesus foretold that at the Second Advent, Christ would first suffer many things and be rejected by his generation.⁸⁸

When people receive revelations about Christ at the Second Advent or hear his words, they will respond in ways similar to the way the Jews in Jesus' day responded. God did not reveal the news of the birth of Jesus to the priests and scribes, but to gentile astrologers and pure-hearted shepherds. This is like the case of a father who, due to the ignorance of his own children, has to confide in his step-child. Likewise, God may well reveal the news of the return of Christ first to lay people, to marginal spiritual groups and churches which the mainstream treats with disdain, or to conscientious non-believers. Only later may the news reach the mainstream Christian clergy who are unthinkingly keeping to their conventional ways of faith. In Jesus' day, those who sincerely received the Gospel were not the Jewish leaders, but simple common folk and Gentiles. Likewise, at Christ's return, simple Christians and non-Christians will accept the Lord's words before the Christian leadership, which regards itself as God's elect. This is the meaning of Jesus' parable of the marriage feast. When the invited guests, the leading men of the community, declined the king's invitation:

He said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find." And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. —*Matt. 22:8-10*

87. Rev. 21:1-4

88. Luke 17:25

Both in Jesus' day and at the Second Advent, many devout believers who set out on the path of faith with the hope of entering Heaven may actually find themselves in hell. In Jesus' day, because the priests and scribes had the responsibility to guide God's chosen people, they should have been the first to recognize that the Messiah had come and should have led the Jewish people to him. To help them fulfill their mission, Jesus took the initiative; he visited the Temple and taught them the Gospel before teaching anyone else.⁸⁹ However, when they did not receive him, Jesus had no choice but to search the shores of Galilee and take disciples from among the fishermen there. He had to minister to the dregs of society and associate with sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes. Eventually, the priests and scribes persecuted him to the point where he had to accept the fate of the cross. They committed this murder, believing that they had done a righteous deed by eliminating a dangerous heretic and blasphemer. Then they continued on with their customary clerical duties for the rest of their lives, reciting the Holy Scriptures, paying their tithes, and making sacrifices at the Temple, all with the assurance that they were headed toward Heaven. Instead, after they passed on, they found themselves most unexpectedly in hell. Ironically, the very path upon which they had set out to reach Heaven had led them astray.

Recognizing that similar events may occur in the Last Days, each of us should seriously examine ourselves. Many Christians today are dashing on a path which they believe leads to Heaven. Yet if they take a wrong step, their path may actually lead them to hell. This is why Jesus once said that he will rebuke many devout believers in the Last Days, even those whose dedication is so strong that they can cast out demons and perform miracles in his name: "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers."⁹⁰

In truth, no one faces a more precarious situation than believers who live in such a transition period of history as exists today. No matter how much faith we have demonstrated in our lives, if we, like the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day, take the wrong step of turning against the returning Christ, all our efforts will have been in vain. Of these people, Daniel had said, "Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but those who are wise shall understand."⁹¹

89. Luke 2:42-47

90. Matt. 7:23

91. Dan. 12:10

SECTION 5

THE CHAOTIC PROFUSION OF LANGUAGES AND THE NECESSITY FOR THEIR UNIFICATION

If human beings had not fallen, we would have formed one global family, which may be likened to a body whose members are all interlinked with each other with God as their head. Then all would have shared a common language; there never would have risen a profusion of tongues unintelligible to one another. The reason various languages arose and prevented free communication between peoples is that, once their vertical relationship with God was severed at the Fall, all horizontal relationships between people were also cut off. Humanity then splintered, dispersed to different geographical locations, and formed isolated communities.

There is also a biblical account giving spiritual insight into the confusion of languages. This is the story of the Tower of Babel.⁹² Noah's descendants had shared a common language. One day, the descendants of Noah's second son Ham, who had sinned against God, built the Tower of Babel to exalt themselves even above God, thus furthering the will of Satan. When the descendants of Shem and Japheth, who stood on God's side, helped with the construction, God brought such confusion to their languages that they could no longer communicate with each other to further the will of Satan.

As children of the same parents, having the same feelings of joy, anger, sorrow and pleasure, if we cannot share our deepest feelings with one another because we speak different languages, it is the greatest of misfortunes. Our languages therefore must be unified if we are to realize the ideal world of one global family which can honor Christ at the Second Advent as our True Parent. As expressed in the account of the building of the Tower of Babel, chaos was brought to our languages when we exalted the will of Satan. The principle of restoration through indemnity requires that we participate in the construction of God's tower and the glorification of God's Will as the way to unify all languages.

Based upon which language will all languages be unified? The answer to this question is obvious. Children should learn the language of their parents. If Christ does indeed return to the land of Korea, then he will certainly use the Korean language, which will then become the mother tongue for all humanity. Eventually, all people should speak the

92. Gen. 11:1-9

True Parents' language as their mother tongue. All of humanity will become one people and use one language, thus establishing one global nation under God.